

Written statement prepared by Senator John L. Burton (Retired)
Submitted to U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee
Hearing on "Understanding Problems in First Contract Negotiations: Post-Doctoral
Scholar Bargaining at the University of California"
Friday, April 30, 2010

I am honored that the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee has asked me to testify in a hearing to understand better the issues surrounding post-doctoral scholar bargaining at the University of California (UC). I want to thank the Committee for coming out to California to hold the hearing.

I have some experience with these issues that may shed further light on this particular case study of first contract negotiations. In 1999-2000, while serving as President Pro Tempore of the California State Senate, I was drawn into oversight responsibilities and mediation efforts with respect to an earlier first contract being negotiated between the UC and its graduate student employees.

Such negotiations were difficult for various reasons. For example:

1. It was difficult to coordinate within the different offices of the UC during the contract negotiation. For instance, the Office of the UC President and the UC Labor Relations staff members were not in agreement over negotiation stance.
2. The contract that was negotiated between 1999-2000 was the first for graduate students in the entire UC system. There were concerns over the contract's implication for graduate education, such as union work rules overruling academic judgment. Such concerns were shown not to be valid on hindsight.

I am happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have. Thank you.